(d) if so, what was the reaction of the Chief Ministers thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. A National Conference on Civil Aviation was held on 10.01.2008 at New Delhi, involving the Minister concerned and the Chief Secretaries of all States and Union Territories.

(b) The Conference was organized with the purpose to sensitize the States regarding the various programmes and policies of the Government of India as well as to provide a forum for the States to project issues of their concern. All States/UTs showed keen interest and attended the conference.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The issue regarding reduction of sales tax on ATF was brought to the notice of State Government representatives. The representatives of various States reacted positively on this issue.

Dearth of Commercial Pilots

1102. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a dearth of Commercial Pilots for airlines in India;

(b) if so, the number of foreign pilots working in India, airline-wise;

(c) whether it is a fact that the requirement of Commercial Pilots would be around 6000 in the next five years and the Training Institute in India, both Public and Private are few, which may never meet this huge demand at all; and

(d) if so, what is the short term and long term policies and measures of Government to tide over this problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Civil aviation industry in the country is facing a shortage of type rated pilots. In order to bridge the gap between the demand and availability of pilots, 944 foreign pilots have been engaged by various airline operators. The airline-wise break up is Indigo-96, Paramount Airways-13, Blue Dart-12, Spice Jet-55, Air Deccan-140, Alliance Air-73, Go Air-14, Kingfisher Airlines-107, Jet Airways-275, Jet Lite-13, Air India-63 and Air India Charter-83.

(c) On the basis of estimated growth in civil aviation sector there may be a requirement of 5000 pilots in the next five years.

(d) The Government has taken various steps to reduce the gap between demand and supply of skilled Indian pilots. These include conditionally increasing the age-limit to 65 years for pilots, upgradation and modernisation of training infrastructure of the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akadmi (IGRUA) to enhance its training capacity from 40 to 100 pilots per year, setting up of a world class flying training institute at Gondia, Maharashtra for training 100 cadets and assistance to flying clubs by allocating trainer aircraft through Directorate General of Civil Aviation/Aero Club of India.